Christian Unity Newsletter

I April 1956 No. 1

Reorganized Council Begins Second Year
Executive Committee Reviews Work

At a meeting in Indianapolis October 24, the Executive ommittee reviewed the work of the Council since its re-org nization at Miami in October, 1954, and laid out broad plans or next year's work.

Among projects undertaken in the past year, the Committee eard reports on the Disciples Fellowship Mission to Europe nd the Middle East, on studies of the (Greenwich) Plan of nion, appointments for ecumenical service abroad, support f the World Council and National Council, and participation n ecumenical conferences. The report on publications indi- ated that four issues of the *CHRISTIAN UNITY NEWSLETTER* and wo issues of the *ECUMENICAL STUDIES SERIES*, supplemented by wo issues of *SHANE QUARTERLY*, had been distributed, that r. Garrison's book, *DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN UNITY*, nd the *EVANSTON RESPONSE* had been published, and other cumenical materials distributed.

Concerns

oking to future responsibilities, ommittee appointed a sub-committee *lations with Churches and Union ents Abroad* within the Central tment of Christian Unity with l Sly as chairman and Robert s, executive. Other members of ommittee are Searle Bates, Curtis , Mrs. Russell Putnam, Walter and Ralph Wilburn.

mbers appointed to the Department umenical Study were Irvin Lunger, man, W.B. Blakemore, James Clague, d S. Moreland, Mrs. G.E. Owen, and Hempstead. Professor Ronald E. n is Director.

Support of WCC Headquarters ilding

e Executive Committee authorized ppointment of a special sub-com- e to direct effort to secure full ple support of the World Coun- Headquarters Building project. A tentative budget asking of $22,040 was also authorized for the total work of the Council.

Ecumenical Studies Outlines Program

The Department of Ecumenical Studies, Irvin E. Lunger, chairman, met in Indianapolis, January 25, to draw up plans for ecumenical studies among Disciples of Christ. Main purpose of the Department, as outlined by Professor Ronald E. Osborn, Director, is (a) to relate Disciples in a responsible way to official ecumenical studies of such bodies as the World Council of Churches, (b) to maintain a program of serious study among Disciples, and (c) to prepare Disciples for competent participation in world-wide ecumenical study.

In its day-long deliberations the Department considered nearly 30 areas of study, defining methods and assigning responsibility for the next stages of study. A fuller report on study plans will appear in an early issue of the *Ecumenical Studies Series*.

Disciples and Unity

Plan Of Union

Indianapolis Conference proposes Joint Study

Scribes and chairmen of ten area groups of Disciples which have worked at the Plan of Union (Greenwich Plan) since last year met at the School of Religion, Indianapolis, in October to consider what suggestions and recommendations should be made to the Greenwich Conference. In the two-day conference, delegates "found their enthusiasm increasing," while at the same time some 13 pages of typewritten suggestions were drawn up to be forwarded to the inter-denominational committee. A covering letter from the Indianapolis conference to that committee summarizes the view-point of the conference and is attached to this *Newsletter*.

Jamaica,, "Why Unite?"

The Church Union Commission, comprising the Congregational Union, the Disciples of Christ, the Methodist Church, the Moravian Church, and the Presbyterian Church have issued a small document entitled *Why Unite?* as a challenge (by the churches of Jamaica) to their denominations to unite; our agreements in the faith are more important than our differences; the call to our churches is to face the Jamaican situation united in belief and in organization. The document lists 16 reasons for uniting, including, among others, "truths will not be lost but be consecrated to wider use"; "restricted fellowships are imperfect instruments"; "a divided church belies its own creed."

Ecumenical Service Department Appoint Overseas Workers

In conjunction with the Wo Council of Churches, the Departm of Ecumenical Service is seeking c petent Disciples for ecumenical s vice in Korea, Taiwan (Formosa), East Pakistan. In all three pla the work is of an emergency natu in Korea involving general adminis tion of relief and health progra in Taiwan involving administration a total ecimenical relief and rec struction program, and in East Pa stan involving resettlement for agricultural Christian community. inations will be made by the Depa ment to the World Council. Adminis tion will be under the World Counc together with the Department and churches of the area concerned.

News Briefs

Malcom McCallum reports from Eg that some 25,000 new-born refug are being added to the refugee pr lem each year. He urges Disciples study the issues in the Middle E situation urgently and intensive

George Walker Buckner, Jr., was elected Director of Friends of World Council of Churches for th years.

Parker Rossman, on loan f U.C.M.S. to the World Student Christ Federation to assist in planning c rennial conference in Frankfurt, G many, in August, sailed from New Y January 4.

James Crain was elected presid of the Board of Directors of the C cil of Churches of Greater Houston

Robert Tobias was called by World Council to participate in a cial mission to Istanbul, Turk November 5 - 10.

Perry Gresham and Ronald E. Osb were named to the Permanent Work Committee for the 1957 Faith Order Conference on the Nature Unity.

Unity Around the World

China – Christians and Ecumenical Contact

Returning from a Quaker mission to China, Mr. Duncan Wood reported that news of ecumenical developments in the West has been received with great interest among Christians in China. While, according to Mr. Wood, "church leaders said 'not yet' when asked whether the time had come for fuller collaboration in ecumenical work," they presently have a sense of solidarity in prayer with Christians around the world and look forward to the time when closer contacts will be possible. In principle the Bureau of Religious affairs of the Chinese government does not object to visits between Chinese and other churches, but practical possibilities are as yet limited. In the meantime, theological training goes on in united seminaries, and evangelistic preaching and mid-week Bible studies are wide spread. The Inter-Denominational Youth Conference held in Shanghai in 1955 was attended by 600 people according to Mr. Wood. (EPS)

Japan – United Church Growth

Membership in the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) increased by 7% in the last decade. Membership now numbers 162,397. In the past year 72 new churches were added, and 42 new missions stations. The United Church now includes 1,455 Congregations and 285 mission stations. (EPS)

India – United Sunday School Curriculum

Twenty-six representatives of churches and inter-denominational bodies met at Leonard Theological College in November to initiate new Sunday School curriculum materials throughout India. The new curriculum is to include a graded series for larger church schools and a unified series for smaller village churches. (EPS)

New Zealand – Plan of Union Proposal

Presbyterians, Methodists, the Congregational Union and the Associated Churches of Christ have agreed to a "covenant with God and one another to take counsel together in all matters of common concern, to learn from one another as the Spirit may direct, and to seek all opportunities to express the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ whom we acknowledge to be the soled head of the church." If a poll of members, to be taken in 1957, indicates willingness to unite, a detailed basis of union is to be prepared for further consideration. In the meantime, congregations of the four churches are considering a study booklet "Shall We Unite," under the guidance of regional inter-denominational committees.

Unity around the World

Thailand - "Foreign" and "Local" Christians Unite

The English speaking "International Church" in Bangkok, Thailand, has voted to become part of the United Church of Christ in Thailand. This is the first English-speaking Union Church to become fully affiliated with the organizational church life of another country. There are presently some 75 such Union Churches for Americans living overseas, largely under the direction of Dr. Robbins Barstow of the National Council of Churches.

Europe - Association of Laymen's Institutes

An association of heads of protestant laymen's institutes and academies in Europe was established at a meeting held in Bad Boll, Germany, last autumn. Institutes and academies in Norway, Sweden, Finland, England, Holland, France and Switzerland were represented. Olov Hartman, director of Sigtuna in Sweden was elected president. According to Dr. Hartman, they look forward to the time when there will be a world-wide association of such laymen's leaders.

Britain - Anglicans, on Church of South India

Three unofficial groups of Anglicans, the Society for Promoting Catholic Unity, the Catholic League, and the Council for Foreign Church Contacts, have issued a circular calling on Anglican clergymen to oppose resolutions adopted by the Anglican Church in July approving limited inter-communion with the Church of South India. The circular states that the South Indian Church is "rooted in an act of schism by which it deliberately cut itself off from communion with every part of the Catholic Church in order to unite with protestant sects." The three groups involved are reported to be small but outspoken in their views.

Britian - Anglo-Catholics and Church of South India

"Church Union," a representative Anglo-Catholic organization in Britian, has issued a statement on "Doctrine and Church Relations." The statement, while indicating that the Church union goes along with the Church of England convocation in its general approval of the Church of South India, points out some irregularities with regard to the ministry and warns the Church of South India and the Anglican Church "to give immediate attention to these irregularities." "The Church Union welcomes the statement of the (Anglican) archbishops that the South India scheme will not be taken as a model for future action; and since unity must be unity in Catholic truth, it affirms that if this truth is to be duly presented, there must be Catholic participation in all conversations aiming at reunion." (EPS)

Unity around the World

Britian – Presbyterian – Anglican Conversations

Representatives of the Church of Scotland and the Church of England met together at Lambeth Palace in London in mid-January to discuss plans for "inter-communion leading on to full unity." Members of the conference had met in October, when a draft report was prepared for the January meeting. It is expected that the representatives will submit a full report in 1957 for consideration of the two churches.

Britian – Anglican – Methodist Conversations

Conversations between the Anglican and Methodist churches toward ultimate union "will undoubtedly ... be the major event of 1956 in the fields of church union" in Britian, according to Cecil Northcott correspondent for Christian Century.

U.S.A.– Episcopalians and South Indian Union

A special delegation has been named by the Protestant Episcopal Church to visit the Church of South India this summer. The delegation was named by Presiding Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill in accordance with a resolution adopted by the 58th General Convention in Honolulu last September. The mission will report to the meeting of that church's Joint Commission on Ecumenical Relations in 1957.

U.S.A. –Lutheran Merger Conversations

A joint invitation "to all American Lutheran bodies" to meet with them to discuss organic union has been extended by the United Lutheran Church in America and the Augustana Lutheran Church following a decision taken on December 16. The other fourteen Lutheran church bodies have been invited to name delegations to meet with the ULCA and Augustana Synod "to consider such organic union as will give real evidence of our unity." The invitation suggests that commissions of the respective church bodies meet sometime after November 1, 1956, to "draft a constitution and devise organizational procedures to effect union." Dr. Oscar A. Benson, Minneapolis, President of the Augustana Church has stated that the obstacles to Lutheran unity are sociological and psychological, not theological.

U.S.A. – United American Lutheran Church

A joint Union Committee of the American Lutheran Church, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Free Church has set 1959 as the year for a constituting convention for the creation of a new American Lutheran Church from these four parties. The committee has been working for some time on a draft "Articles of Union" for the new church which will deal with various items of structure and polity.

Unity around the World

U.S.A. - Presbyterian Merger

The joint drafting committee of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and the United Presbyterian Church of North America has announced the setting of May 1958, as a tentative date for the merger of these two churches. The drafting committee met early in January to work out a Plan of Union for the two churches. Present plans are based on the former three-way plan which involved also the Presbyterian Church U.S. The latter church voted in 1954 not to merge with the other two churches. According to the committee's recommendations the modified plan will be presented to the Church Unity Commissions of the two denominations in March and, if accepted by their respective General Assemblies and presbyteries, would call for a combined assembly to be held in May 1958, in Pittsburg. 1958 is the centenary of the United Presbyterian Church. The two churches together number some 3,000,000 members with 9,000 congregations and 10,000 ordained ministers. The new church, according to the plan, would be called the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

U.S.A.-Congregational Christian Evangelical and Reformed Merger

The joint committee of the Congregational-Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church has set June 25, 1957, as the date for final decision for merger between these two churches.

In the meantime, a group representing 106 Congregational-Christian congregations of the total 5,536 has banded together to try to block the merger.

U.S.A.-Orthodox Merger Favored

At its ninth sobor in New York, the Russian Orthodox Church of North America expressed its general approval of the eventual union of all Eastern Orthodox churches in America. The Russian church has taken a lead in merger discussions which have been going on for 20 years, and which is considered inevitable. Total membership of Orthodox Communicants in America, including Greek, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Roumanian, Russian and Albanian Orthodox Christians is around 6,000,000. A proposal for the publication of a Pan-Orthodox monthly is presently being considered by the several jurisdictions and their Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Jurisdiction in America."

U.S.A.-Disciples and World Relations

A "Committee on Relations with Churches and Union Movements Abroad" has been established by Disciples of Christ "to study Disciples' relations to churches and union movements abroad both among the younger and older churches. The committee is to be concerned with existing relations and principles involved therein. It will have special interest in exploring areas for the development of such relations and in making definite suggestions and proposals for closer relations. It will develop means for reporting from time to time ... on its findings." Members of the committee include Virgil Sly, Chairman; M. Searle Bates; Curtis Jones; Mrs. Russell Putnam; Walter W. Sikes; Ralph G. Wilburn; and Robert Tobias, Executive.

National and World Councils

ional Council – Report on Ecumeni- Education

The National Council's special com- tee on the study of ecumenical ed- tion, after a year of research, prepared its recommendations to General Board. Among other pro- ls the commission has recommended establishment of a standing com- ion on ecumenical education which ld (a) continue further surveys erning ecumenical education and needs, (b) initiate national and lonal institutes or seminars for ons responsible for ecumenical ed- ion, (c) seek to coordinate some ting efforts toward ecumenical ed- ion, (d) conduct some pilot pro- s in cooperation with seminaries rested in ecumenical education, (e) provide some opportunities ecumenical contact of laymen and women with a view to enchancing r evangelistic mission. The pro- d commission would also give con- eration to the ultimate desira- ity of some form of ecumenical titute in North America.

te Council – Arkansas

epresentatives of leading protes- t churches in Arkansas met on mber 20 to draw up plans for a isional Arkansas State Council of rches. The draft constitution is e presented for consideration by ch bodies in Arkansas during the r 1956. Rev. James W. Rainwater, iples of Christ minister in Bly- ville is recording secretary of provisional committee, and Dr. blin of the Methodist Church in ski Heights is acting president.

d Council – 1957 Faith and Order ference

he campus of Oblerlin College has selected as the site for the conference on *The Nature of the y We Seek*. The conference will g together some 400 represent- tives of churches in the U S and Canada plus 100 consultants. Sixteen area commissions are working on specific phases of the general theme. Reports from the area commissions will eventually be released to delegates prior to the conference. Secondary themes will include *Unity in Faith and Order*, *Unity in Order and Organization*, and *Unity in Mission to the Local Community*. In addition, papers will be presented by American members of World Council theological commissions on such topics as *Our Unity in Christ and the Church* (Robert L. Calhoun), *Our Common History and Our Separate Histories* (Dr. A. C. Cutler), and *Worship of the One God by His One People* (Dr. J. A. Sittler). The conference will take place Sept. 3–10, 1957.

World Council–Headquarters Expansion

The Central Committee, meeting in Switzerland last summer, approved a proposal to construct a $750,000 building to provide modern facilities for headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. Until now the work of the World Council has been carried on in a small chalet, two make-shift barracks, one former villa remodeled into a suitable office building, and a small gatehouse. The new plans will include a modern office building, a chapel and a library. Heretofore, there has been no chapel as such on the World Council grounds and worship services and conferences have been held in the former dining room of the chalet.

Member churches, according to the Central Committee proposal, will be asked to raise $300,000 of the total amount, and individuals and foundations will be asked to raise the remaining $450,000. It is hoped that the entire amount can be raised in three years. The American share of the total amount will be $240,000 and the Disciples' share slightly under $15,000, to be raised in three years.

World Council – Ecumenical Institute Program, 1956

Dr. H. H. Wolf, Director of the Institute, has announced the following conferences for the calendar year. March 22-26, special consultation on application of atomic energy; April 3-7, special consultation on the preparation of the laity for the ministry within the world; April 23-27, course for U. S. A. Air Force chaplains; May 7-12, special conference on refugee problems; May 25-June 8, open course for ministers and priests with general title *Pastor and Layman in the Churches' Ministry*; June 11-16, special conference on education and the armed forces; July 10-20, vacation course for laymen (open); July 24-August 1, vacation course for local church workers (open), with emphasis on the ecumenical responsibility within the local parish; August 4-24, course open for theological students on the theme *The Church; Its Unity, Diversity and Division*; August 20-September 4, special conference on the church and rural life; September 6-10, special consultation with church historians; October 1-February 15, 1957, Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, including a special course on *People, Race, Nation*.

Rates for the open courses or conferences run between $2.50 and $3.00 per day including meals, lodging, etc. Full information is available from the World Council office, New York.

Books

Evanston-Official Report

Harper Bros., New York, 358 pages, $5.00. Includes a narrative account report on the main theme, discussion of the message, reports of the sections, reports of the assembly committees, report on structure and functioning, list of member churches, list of delegates, etc., appendices including constitution, recommendations, statements, statistics, rules. Available from Council on Christian Unity at $4.00.

Growing Together, a Manual for Councils of Churches, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, 120 pages, $2.50. Contents include chapters on *What is a Council of Churches, the Philosophy of a Council, Steps in Organization, Typical Constitutions, Suggestions for Personnel, Program Building, Agenda, Relationships, Principles and Procedures, Finances, Public Relations, Resources from the National Council*. Available from National Council of Churches.

W. C. C. Studies

The Studies Division has begun a new series of *Bulletins* describing its program, indicating bibliography and giving further information and comment on the world-wide Ecumenical studies program. Issue #2 is now available. Its contents include a report on Christians and War in the Atomic Age, Tradition and Tradition, Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change, Christianity and non-Christian Religions, and other study projects. Bulletin #2 also lists the total scope of the Division's study plans. Subscriptions to the bulletin are available direct from the World Council of Churches office, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, 50¢ per year, two issues.

Todd, R. S. Garfield, *Christian Unity, Christ's Prayer*, Peter Ainslie Memorial Lecture, Council on Christian Unity. Copies of this lecture are normally sent to directors of the Council. A few additional single copies are available on request.

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